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ABSTRACT

Anticipated improvements in the educational level of the Nation's labor force, projected to the year 1985, are discussed and illustrated by tables and charts. These present data concerning the following: years of school completed by persons 25 years old and over in the civilian labor force, by sex and race, 1950 to 1985; projected educational attainment of the civilian force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985; percent of persons in population and civilian labor force with 4 years of high school or more, by age and sex, selected years; percent of persons 25 and over in civilian labor force with 4 years of high school or more, by age, race, and sex, selected years; percent of men and women 25 and over in civilian labor force with 4 years or more of college, by age, selected years; projected educational attainment of the white civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985; and projected educational attainment of the Negro and other races civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985. A continued upgrading to 1985 is predicted as the educational attainment of whites and Negroes, men and women, converges toward a median of 12.6 years. (DB)

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Education of adult workers: projections to 1985

Special
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Education of adult workers: projections to 1985

Special Labor Force Report notes a continued upgrading to 1985 as the educational attainment of whites and Negroes, men and women converges toward a median of 12.6 years

DENIS F. JOHNSTON

THE ADULT LABOR FORCE of 1985 will be younger, better educated, and more homogeneous (among race, sex, and age groups) in its educational attainment than it is today. In the span of just over a generation (from 1950 to 1985), the Nation's adult labor force is expected to increase by about 77 percent, but the number of high school graduates will more than double and the number of college graduates will triple in the same 35-year period. Further, gaps in educational attainment between men and women and white and Negro workers will narrow so that by 1985 the years of school completed for each of these groups will have converged toward a median of over 12 years.

These vast changes in educational composition are to be accompanied by, and will partly result from, a major shift in the age distribution of the Nation's adult work force. In 1965, workers 25 to 34, whose average educational attainment is higher than that of older workers, amounted to 24 percent of the civilian labor force 25 and over. By 1985, this younger and relatively better educated group will make up 34 percent of the workers 25 and over—a rise in number from 14.2 million in 1965 to 28.3 million in 1985. Their attitudes, values, and even life styles, shaped by exposure to the educational milieu of the sixties and early seventies, are bound to have a strong effect on work during the 1980's and beyond.

The expected convergence in the educational attainment of the white and Negro races reflects the continuing response of "Negro and other" youth to the increased educational opportunities available to them.[1] Table 1 shows that the 1950 census disclosed a gap of 3.3 years in the median educational attainment of white workers 25 and over (10.3 years) and of the corresponding "Negro and other" group (7.0 years). By 1965 this gap had narrowed to 2.3 years (12.2 years among white adult workers and 9.9 years among the "Negro and other" group). The projections presented in this report reflect the assumption that this convergence will continue, so that by 1985, white workers 25 and over are expected to have a median educational attainment of 12.6 years, and Negro and other workers an attainment of 12.3 years—with a remaining "gap" of only 0.3 years.

Another major development, the spread of higher levels of educational attainment among every age group of the labor force, demonstrates the increased availability of higher education. By 1985, the principal beneficiaries of the immediate post-World War II "GI Bill" will have advanced into the 60–69 age group, while the younger age cohorts immediately following will have enjoyed equal or greater opportunities to further their education. This means that even persons 65 and over in the labor force are expected to have a median educational attainment of 12 years by 1985, a rise from 9.0 years in 1965. In contrast, the median educational attainment of the younger adult workers (25 to 34 years old) is expected to rise only slightly, from 12.5 years in 1965 to 12.7 years in 1985, providing a more homogeneous labor force with respect to its average amount of formal education than in 1965.[2] (See table 2.)

A similar convergence in the educational attainment of men and women workers is already evident. Since World War II, the prevailing job opportunities have attracted large numbers of women with only average amounts of schooling, so that the educational distribution of the female labor force now resembles that of the female

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NOTE: The projected civilian labor force numbers in this report are consistent with the projected total labor force in Sophia C. Travis, "The U.S. labor force: projections to 1985," *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1970, pp. 3–12.

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Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 1. Years of school completed by persons 25 years old and over in the civilian labor force, by sex and race, selected years, 1950 to 1985
[Percent distribution]

Race, sex, and year	Total		Elementary school			High school		College		Median years of school completed
	Number (in thousands)	Percent	Less than 5 years [1]	5 to 7 years	8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years or more	
ALL RACES										
Both sexes										
1950 census	47,240	100.0	9.3	15.3	20.1	18.0	21.3	7.8	8.0	9.9
1957–59 [2]	55,909	100.0	6.3	11.4	16.8	19.2	27.8	8.4	10.2	11.4
1964–65–66	60,067	100.0	4.1	8.7	13.4	18.9	32.8	9.6	12.5	12.2
1967–68–69	63,618	100.0	3.1	7.2	11.0	17.6	36.4	11.0	13.7	12.3
Projected: 1975	69,803	100.0	2.4	5.3	8.2	17.8	39.9	11.2	15.2	12.4
1980	76,327	100.0	1.8	4.0	6.1	16.8	42.4	12.0	16.9	12.5
1985	83,644	100.0	1.3	2.9	4.5	15.4	44.4	12.7	18.8	12.6
Males										
1950 census	34,928	100.0	10.3	16.2	21.2	17.9	19.5	7.1	7.7	9.4
1957–59 [2]	38,527	100.0	7.1	12.1	17.6	19.2	25.1	8.2	10.8	11.1
1964–65–66	39,821	100.0	4.8	9.3	14.1	18.7	30.0	9.7	13.6	12.1
1967–68–69	40,941	100.0	3.6	7.7	11.7	17.3	33.0	11.5	15.2	12.3
Projected: 1975	44,713	100.0	2.9	5.7	8.7	17.6	36.9	11.3	16.8	12.4
1980	48,665	100.0	2.1	4.3	6.6	16.6	39.7	12.1	18.6	12.5
1985	53,282	100.0	1.6	3.1	4.8	15.1	42.3	12.6	20.5	12.6
Females										
1950 census	12,312	100.0	6.6	12.9	17.1	18.3	26.5	9.8	8.7	11.2
1957–59 [2]	17,382	100.0	4.5	9.9	15.2	19.1	33.7	8.9	8.7	12.0
1964–65–66	20,246	100.0	2.8	7.8	12.0	19.3	38.5	9.5	10.3	12.2
1967–68–69	22,677	100.0	2.2	6.2	9.6	18.2	42.5	10.3	11.1	12.3
Projected: 1975	25,090	100.0	1.5	4.7	7.2	18.1	45.2	11.0	12.2	12.4
1980	27,662	100.0	1.1	3.4	5.4	17.1	47.2	12.0	14.0	12.5
1985	30,362	100.0	.7	2.4	4.0	15.8	48.2	12.9	16.0	12.6
WHITE										
Both sexes										
1950 census	42,459	100.0	6.9	13.9	21.0	18.5	22.7	8.3	8.5	10.3
1964–65–66	53,672	100.0	2.9	7.6	13.6	18.4	34.3	10.1	13.1	12.2
1967–68–69	56,824	100.0	2.1	6.1	11.0	17.0	37.8	11.5	14.5	12.4
Projected: 1975	62,124	100.0	1.8	4.6	8.1	17.0	41.0	11.6	15.9	12.5
1980	67,631	100.0	1.3	3.4	6.1	16.0	43.2	12.4	17.8	12.5
1985	73,728	100.0	1.0	2.5	4.4	14.5	45.0	13.0	19.7	12.6
Males										
1950 census	31,793	100.0	7.9	15.0	22.1	18.5	20.7	7.5	8.3	9.8
1964–65–66	36,115	100.0	3.4	8.4	14.3	18.3	31.2	10.1	14.3	12.2
1967–68–69	37,057	100.0	2.5	6.8	11.8	16.9	34.1	11.9	16.1	12.4
Projected: 1975	40,140	100.0	2.1	5.0	8.7	17.0	37.7	11.7	17.7	12.5
1980	43,428	100.0	1.6	3.7	6.6	15.9	40.2	12.4	19.6	12.6
1985	47,243	100.0	1.2	2.8	4.7	14.3	42.6	12.9	21.4	12.6
Females										
1950 census	10,666	100.0	4.2	10.4	17.7	18.7	29.0	10.7	9.4	11.8
1964–65–66	17,557	100.0	1.9	6.0	12.0	18.5	40.7	10.0	10.8	12.3
1967–68–69	19,767	100.0	1.4	4.9	9.4	17.3	44.7	10.7	11.6	12.4
Projected: 1975	21,984	100.0	1.1	3.8	7.0	17.1	46.9	11.5	12.7	12.4
1980	24,203	100.0	.7	2.7	5.2	16.1	48.6	12.3	14.4	12.5
1985	26,485	100.0	.6	2.0	3.7	14.8	49.2	13.2	16.5	12.6
NEGRO AND OTHER RACES										
Both sexes										
1950 census	4,781	100.0	30.6	28.4	12.2	13.7	8.9	3.3	2.9	7.0
1964–65–66	6,531	100.0	13.5	17.8	12.3	22.9	20.7	6.0	7.0	9.9
1967–68–69	6,794	100.0	11.5	16.1	10.9	22.5	24.8	7.0	7.2	10.5
Projected: 1975	7,679	100.0	7.2	11.5	8.8	24.2	31.2	8.1	9.0	11.8
1980	8,696	100.0	5.4	8.7	6.7	23.2	36.3	9.3	10.5	12.2
1985	9,916	100.0	3.4	5.8	5.1	22.0	40.5	10.5	12.8	12.3
Males										
1950 census	3,135	100.0	35.1	28.0	11.7	12.4	7.8	2.8	2.2	6.6
1964–65–66	3,829	100.0	17.2	18.0	12.5	22.0	17.9	5.6	6.7	9.3
1967–68–69	3,884	100.0	14.4	16.8	11.0	21.4	22.7	6.9	6.7	10.1
Projected: 1975	4,573	100.0	9.3	11.7	8.6	23.5	29.8	8.0	9.0	11.6
1980	5,237	100.0	6.8	8.9	6.5	22.4	35.9	9.1	10.4	12.2
1985	6,039	100.0	4.4	5.9	4.9	21.4	40.3	10.3	12.8	12.3

Table 1. Years of school completed by persons 25 years old and over in the civilian labor force, by sex and race, selected years, 1950 to 1985—Continued
[Percent distribution]

Race, sex, and year	Total		Elementary school			High school		College		Median years of school completed
	Number (in thousands)	Percent	Less than 5 years [1]	5 to 7 years	8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years or more	
Females										
1950 census	1,646	100.0	22.2	29.1	13.2	16.2	10.9	4.2	4.1	7.9
1964-65-66	2,702	100.0	8.1	17.4	12.0	24.1	24.6	6.4	7.3	10.5
1967-68-69	2,910	100.0	7.7	15.2	10.9	23.8	27.5	7.1	7.8	11.1
Projected: 1975	3,106	100.0	4.1	11.3	9.0	25.2	33.2	8.2	9.0	12.0
1980	3,459	100.0	3.3	8.4	6.9	24.3	37.0	9.5	10.6	12.2
1985	3,877	100.0	1.8	5.5	5.4	22.9	40.8	10.7	12.9	12.4

[1] Includes persons reporting no formal education.
[2] Totals exclude persons whose educational attainment was not reported. Data by race for March 1957 and March 1959 are not available from the Current Population Survey.

NOTE: Data for combined years are Current Population Survey averages.

population as a whole. The several veterans' benefits provisions enacted since 1945 have benefited working-age men greatly with the result that their educational attainment has advanced faster than that of women. In 1957–59, the median years of school completed by men workers 25 and over (11.1 years) was 0.9 years less than that of women workers. By 1964–66, this difference had been reduced to only 0.1 years (12.1 years for men and 12.2 years for women). By 1985, the corresponding medians are expected to be 12.6 years among both groups of adult workers. The educational upgrading and increased homogeneity across age, sex, and race lines expected to take place between now and 1985 are demonstrated in charts 1 and 2.

The educationally disadvantaged

The magnitude of these anticipated improvements in the educational level of the Nation's labor force draws attention away from a number of persistent problems. Concealed in the above averages and aggregates are the 3.5 million persons who will be working or seeking work under the potential handicap of very limited formal education (less than 8 years completed) in 1985. While their number is expected to decline sharply during this period (from 7.7 million in 1965), their age composition will make it even harder than at present for them to retain rewarding jobs or to find such jobs if they become unemployed. The median age of these less educated workers is expected to rise from 51 years in 1965 to 52 years by 1985, while that of all workers 25 and over is expected to decline during this period from 44 years in 1965 to 41 years in 1985.

In addition, there will be the continuing problem of providing both meaningful job opportunities and needed remedial training for the 20.1 million adult workers in 1985 who will not have completed 4 years of high school. This group is expected to decline from 27.1 million, or 45 percent of the adult labor force, in 1965. Unlike the workers with less than 8 years of schooling, those with less than 4 years of high school will include a considerable number of younger workers whose career aspirations will not be adequately supported by the amount of formal education they will have obtained.[3]

Despite the rapid improvement in their educational level, Negro workers are still expected to constitute a disproportionate amount of the total number of workers with less than 4 years of high school. By 1985, when 12 percent of the adult labor force is expected to be made up of Negro workers, 18 percent of those with less than a complete high school education will be in the "Negro and other" group.

A further potential problem stems from the continuing imbalance between men and women with respect to higher education. Despite the fact that women college graduates have a much higher rate of labor force participation than less educated women, the proportion of adult working women with college degrees is not expected to converge significantly toward that of adult working men. As indicated in chart 3, nearly 14 percent of adult working men and 10 percent of adult working women had completed 4 years or more of college in 1965. By 1985, over 20 percent of the working men, and 16 percent of the women,

Table 2. Projected educational attainment of the civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985
[Percent distribution]

Age and years of school completed	1975			1980			1985		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
25 YEARS AND OVER									
Total: Number (in thousands)	69,803	44,713	25,090	76,327	48,665	27,662	83,644	53,282	30,362
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	33.7	34.9	31.5	28.7	29.6	27.0	24.1	24.6	22.9
4 years of high school or more	66.3	65.0	68.4	71.3	70.4	73.2	75.9	75.4	77.1
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	2.4	2.9	1.5	1.8	2.1	1.1	1.3	1.6	.7
5 to 7 years	5.3	5.7	4.7	4.0	4.3	3.4	2.9	3.1	2.4
8 years	8.2	8.7	7.2	6.1	6.6	5.4	4.5	4.8	4.0
High school: 1 to 3 years	17.8	17.6	18.1	16.8	16.6	17.1	15.4	15.1	15.8
4 years	39.9	36.9	45.2	42.4	39.7	47.2	44.4	42.3	48.2
College: 1 to 3 years	11.2	11.3	11.0	12.0	12.1	12.0	12.7	12.6	12.9
4 years or more	15.2	16.8	12.2	16.9	18.6	14.0	18.8	20.5	16.0
Median years of school completed	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.6	12.6	12.6
25 TO 34 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	21,301	14,339	6,962	25,474	17,054	8,420	28,264	18,840	9,424
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	21.2	21.9	20.1	17.8	18.2	17.1	14.9	15.0	14.6
4 years of high school or more	78.7	78.1	79.9	82.2	81.9	82.9	85.1	85.0	85.4
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	0.9	1.1	0.5	.7	.9	.4	.5	.6	.3
5 to 7 years	2.0	2.3	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.0	.9	1.0	.7
8 years	3.1	3.4	2.6	2.2	2.4	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.3
High school: 1 to 3 years	15.2	15.1	15.4	13.6	13.4	13.9	12.0	11.8	12.3
4 years	46.2	44.8	49.0	47.3	46.6	48.8	48.1	48.1	48.1
College: 1 to 3 years	13.5	13.5	13.5	14.2	14.0	14.5	14.6	14.2	15.3
4 years of more	19.0	19.8	17.4	20.7	21.3	19.6	22.4	22.7	22.0
Median years of school completed	12.6	12.6	12.6	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.7
35 TO 44 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	16,044	10,246	5,798	18,386	11,682	6,704	23,009	14,616	8,393
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	30.6	30.9	29.9	25.6	26.2	24.8	21.2	21.2	20.9
4 years of high school or more	69.5	69.1	70.1	74.3	73.8	75.2	78.8	78.7	79.0
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	2.0	2.4	1.2	1.4	1.7	.9	1.0	1.2	.6
5 to 7 years	4.5	5.0	3.6	3.1	3.5	2.4	2.0	2.2	1.6
8 years	6.0	6.3	5.4	4.3	4.6	3.9	3.1	3.2	2.8
High school: 1 to 3 years	18.1	17.2	19.7	16.8	16.4	17.6	15.1	14.6	15.9
4 years	42.3	38.8	48.4	44.7	41.7	49.9	46.5	44.3	50.1
College: 1 to 3 years	11.2	11.6	10.6	12.1	12.2	11.9	12.9	12.8	13.2
4 years or more	16.0	18.7	11.1	17.5	19.9	13.4	19.4	21.6	15.7
Median years of school completed	12.5	12.5	12.4	12.5	12.6	12.5	12.6	12.6	12.6
45 TO 54 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	17,145	10,579	6,566	16,252	9,995	6,257	15,987	9,834	6,153
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	38.3	40.8	34.3	35.2	37.4	32.0	29.5	30.6	27.5
4 years of high school or more	61.7	59.2	65.7	64.7	62.6	68.0	70.6	69.4	72.5
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	2.9	3.6	1.8	2.4	3.1	1.4	1.9	2.4	1.1
5 to 7 years	6.4	7.1	5.2	5.5	6.3	4.3	4.1	4.6	3.2
8 years	9.4	10.5	7.6	7.9	8.9	6.3	5.8	6.3	4.9
High school: 1 to 3 years	19.6	19.6	19.7	19.4	19.1	20.0	17.7	17.3	18.3
4 years	38.3	33.2	46.5	39.4	34.4	47.4	43.3	39.2	49.7
College: 1 to 3 years	10.1	10.1	10.0	10.6	10.8	10.3	11.3	11.6	10.9
4 years or more	13.3	15.9	9.2	14.7	17.4	10.3	16.0	18.6	11.9
Median years of school completed	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.5	12.5	12.5
55 TO 64 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	12,184	7,507	4,677	12,947	7,844	5,103	12,981	7,847	5,134
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	46.7	49.7	41.7	39.5	42.4	35.1	36.2	39.1	31.7
4 years of high school or more	53.4	50.3	58.4	60.5	57.6	64.8	63.8	60.9	68.3
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	3.6	4.6	2.0	2.8	3.6	1.5	2.3	3.0	1.2
5 to 7 years	8.7	9.1	8.0	6.7	7.2	5.8	5.7	6.4	4.5
8 years	14.7	15.6	13.2	10.8	11.7	9.5	8.7	9.7	7.2
High school: 1 to 3 years	19.7	20.4	18.5	19.2	19.9	18.3	19.5	20.0	18.8
4 years	33.2	29.7	38.8	37.8	33.3	44.7	38.3	33.0	46.5
College: 1 to 3 years	9.4	9.5	9.2	10.1	10.3	9.8	10.6	10.8	10.4
4 years or more	10.8	11.1	10.4	12.6	14.0	10.3	14.9	17.1	11.4

Table 2. Projected educational attainment of the civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985—Continued
[Percent distribution]

Age and years of school completed	1975			1980			1985		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
Median years of school completed	12.1	12.0	12.2	12.3	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.3	12.4
65 YEARS AND OVER									
Total: Number (in thousands)	3,129	2,042	1,087	3,268	2,090	1,178	3,403	2,145	1,258
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	58.9	62.2	52.6	53.1	56.6	47.0	47.0	50.7	40.8
4 years of high school or more	41.0	37.7	47.4	46.8	43.5	52.9	53.0	49.4	59.2
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	6.7	7.6	5.1	4.4	5.2	3.0	2.7	3.5	1.4
5 to 7 years	13.2	13.3	12.9	11.0	11.2	10.7	8.8	9.2	8.3
8 years	22.3	23.9	19.2	19.3	20.8	16.7	16.3	17.8	13.7
High school: 1 to 3 years	16.7	17.4	15.4	18.4	19.4	16.6	19.2	20.2	17.4
4 years	20.2	18.1	24.1	24.4	22.1	28.7	29.3	26.0	34.8
College: 1 to 3 years	9.1	7.7	11.8	9.9	8.7	12.1	10.5	9.6	12.2
4 years or more	11.7	11.9	11.5	12.5	12.7	12.1	13.2	13.8	12.2
Median years of school completed	10.4	9.9	11.8	11.5	11.0	12.1	12.1	11.9	12.3

[1] Includes persons reporting no formal education.

are expected to have completed at least 4 years of college. This continued differential only partially reflects the difference in the proportions of the male and female population 25 and over with 4 years or more of college education. In 1965, 12 percent of the adult male population and 7 percent of the adult women were college graduates. By 1985, these proportions are expected to rise to 18.6 and 12.5 percent, respectively. It cannot be argued that these differences reflect differences in opportunity exclusively. Many young women, anticipating a primary role as mothers and homemakers, may either decide to terminate their formal schooling upon graduating from high school, or may pursue less vocationally oriented courses of study if they do enter college. Others may perceive little economic advantage in completing a rigorous program of higher education, since relatively few highly paid positions have traditionally been open to women. Nevertheless, it is also true that many of the public benefits extended to college students have been largely focused on the men, such as veterans' educational benefits, or have been earmarked for subjects largely pursued by men, such as medicine. Furthermore, many families, if they are unable to fully support the higher education of all their children, may still give fuller support to the educational needs of their male offspring. Insofar as these latter considerations continue to operate, women may be said to enjoy fewer opportunities for higher education, quite apart from their own interests in such education.

The total adult civilian labor force (25 and over) is expected to increase at an annual average rate of 1.6 percent between 1965 and 1985. Over this same 20-year period, the corresponding average rates of increase in the number of high school and college graduates in the labor force will be 3.3 and 3.7 percent per year, respectively.

Among Negro workers, these differentials are even more striking. Their adult labor force is expected to increase at an average rate of 2.1 percent per year, while the numbers of both high school and college graduates are expected to increase at over 5 percent per year, on average.

One obvious implication of these rates of increase relates to the kinds of jobs that become available during this period. Whereas overall expansion in employment opportunity for these adult workers should be maintained at a rate of 1.6 percent per year, jobs for college graduates, providing both meaningful career opportunities and an opportunity to use the higher education that has been acquired, should rise at twice that rate. Even more pressing will be the demand of Negro workers for similar positions—a demand that will be supported by a 5-percent-per-year increase in the number of college graduates in this group.

Measurement of quality

There are three major limitations to be recognized in examining data on years of school completed in order to appraise the educational

attainment of the population or of the labor force. First, these data do not include education, training, or other learning experiences occurring outside the framework of formal schooling.[4] Second, they do not reflect possible differences in both the quality of education received and the actual quantity of time spent in school—school years, measured in hours of instruction, have varied widely. Third, they do not provide information on the content of the learning, or on the current status of formal education, training, or skill which a person may once have possessed.

A recent estimate of the U.S. Office of Education indicates that some 30 million adults were engaged in "systematic, planned instructional programs" of some kind in 1968. These programs vary from basic education in the "three R's" for adults with less than 8 years of formal education to highly advanced courses for professionals and technicians seeking to refresh or update their specialized knowledge.[5] Although some of these educational pursuits may lead to receipt of equivalency certificates, and thus be reflected in the data on years of school completed, the bulk of these activities are not included in the official estimates of formal educational attainment.

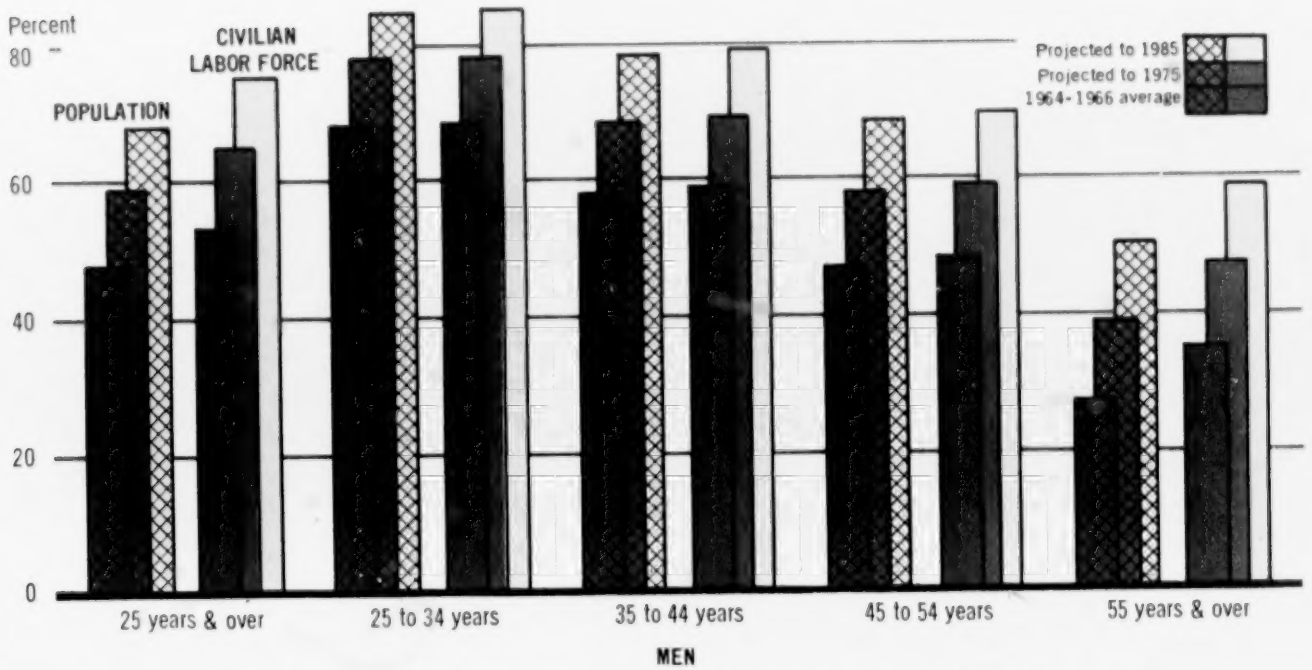
Information on the quality of schooling received and on the current status of acquired knowledge and training is glaringly deficient. Aside from a number of studies relating to particular schools or school systems, only two large-scale testing programs have been established for the purpose of obtaining representative data for the Nation as a whole: *Project Talent* and *The Equality of Educational Opportunity.*[6] While the findings of these two surveys provide a wealth of insight into the factors influencing the quality of educational output, neither study has been designed to measure trends in the quality of education over time. In the absence of such longitudinal studies, it is difficult to distinguish the effect of school-centered factors, such as the quality of faculty, library facilities, or per-pupil expenditures, from that of environmental factors, such as possible changes in the community or in the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of families in the community. Furthermore, only longitudinal studies can provide an adequate assessment of educational "quality" in terms of the retention of learning and its use as a foundation for further educational development.[7] The available data on years of school completed are subject to two important biases: they tend to understate the actual educational attainment of adults who have supplemented their formal schooling in various ways, and they tend to overstate the educational attainment of those whose formal education took place in schools of inferior quality or under environmental conditions which inhibit learning. When statistics of educational attainment are viewed in the aggregate, these biases may be offsetting to some extent; but for particular population groups, these biases may introduce uncertainty as to the significance of reported data on "years of school completed."[8]

Need versus demand

Along with the general upgrading in the educational attainment of white and Negro workers, particularly the young new entrants to the labor force (see tables 3 and 4), there is a parallel upgrading in the expectations of employers with respect to the educational qualifications of those they seek to employ. Three conditions support a continuation of this parallel rise in demand for and supply of the better-educated workers. First, the supply is ensured by the increasing output of our ever-expanding educational system. Second, the interest of employers in accumulating personnel with the highest possible educational qualifications can be justified on the ground that such personnel are more readily adapted to changing job requirements, are more easily trained in a variety of tasks, and are generally more adaptable to positions of increasing responsibility. Finally, as the attainment of at least a high school diploma becomes more common among jobseekers, potential employers tend to view such attainment as a sign of minimum requisite competence for performing any job. The high school dropout is regarded as lacking not only the formal education of the graduates, but also the basic skills, attitudes, and motivations needed for adequate job performance. The outcome, except under very tight labor market conditions, is a situation in which the job applicant with limited formal education is not given equal consideration for available jobs, quite apart from the actual job requirements themselves.

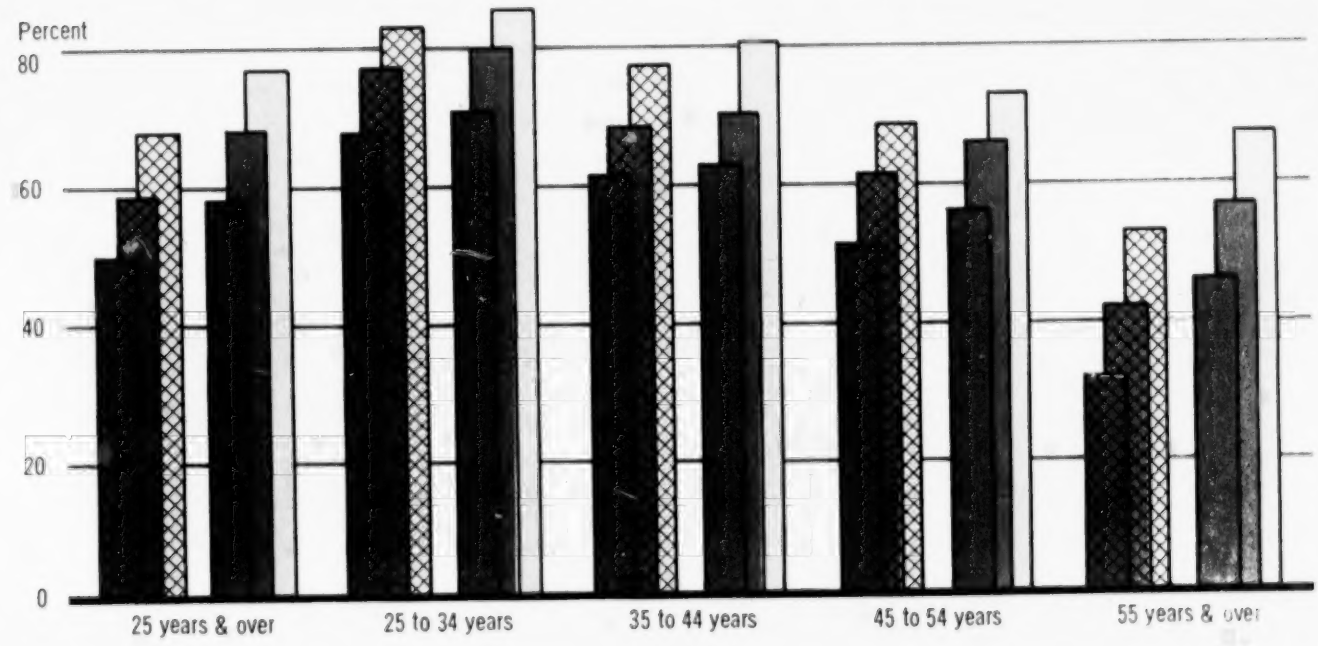
Excessive reliance upon formal education as a requisite for acceptance into the world of work is not only inherently unjust to the millions of less-educated workers and potential workers who possess the need, desire, and basic competence to

Chart 1. Percent of persons in population and civilian labor force with 4 years of high school or more, by age and sex, selected years



MEN

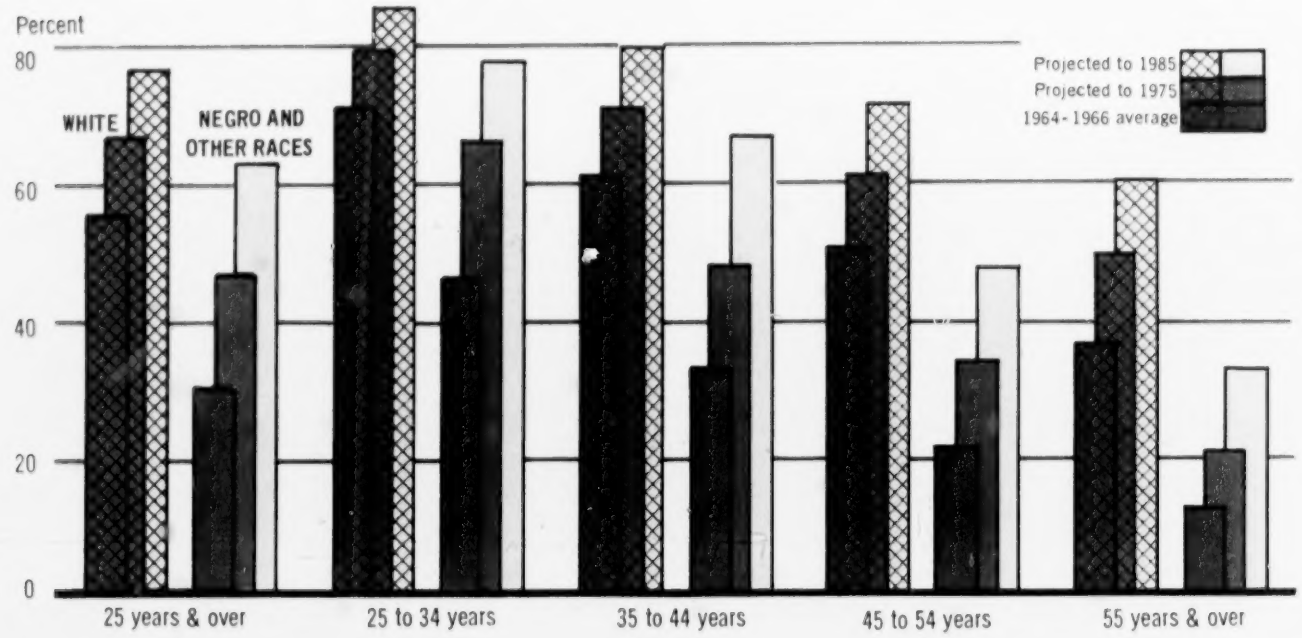
The projected increase in the proportion of high school graduates among adult men points to a more educationally uniform population and labor force by 1985.



WOMEN

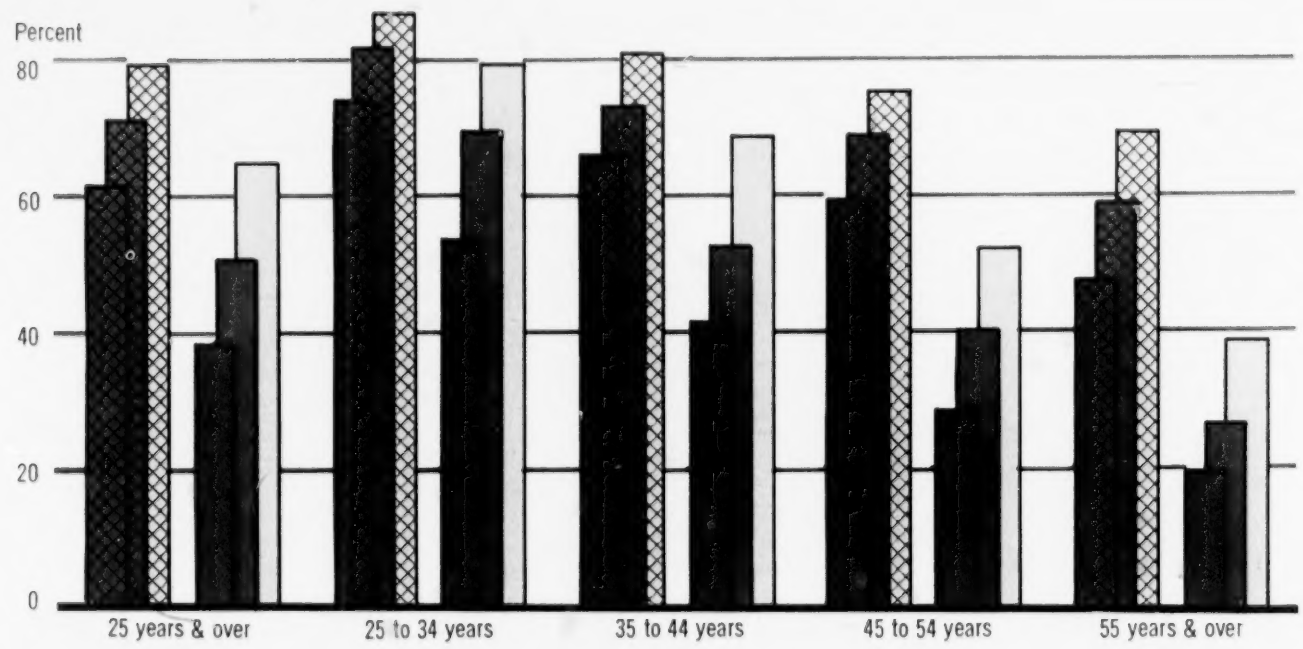
Increased educational homogeneity is also foreseen among adult women in the population and labor force by 1985.

Chart 2. Percent of persons 25 and over in civilian labor force with 4 years of high school or more, by age, race, and sex, selected years



MEN

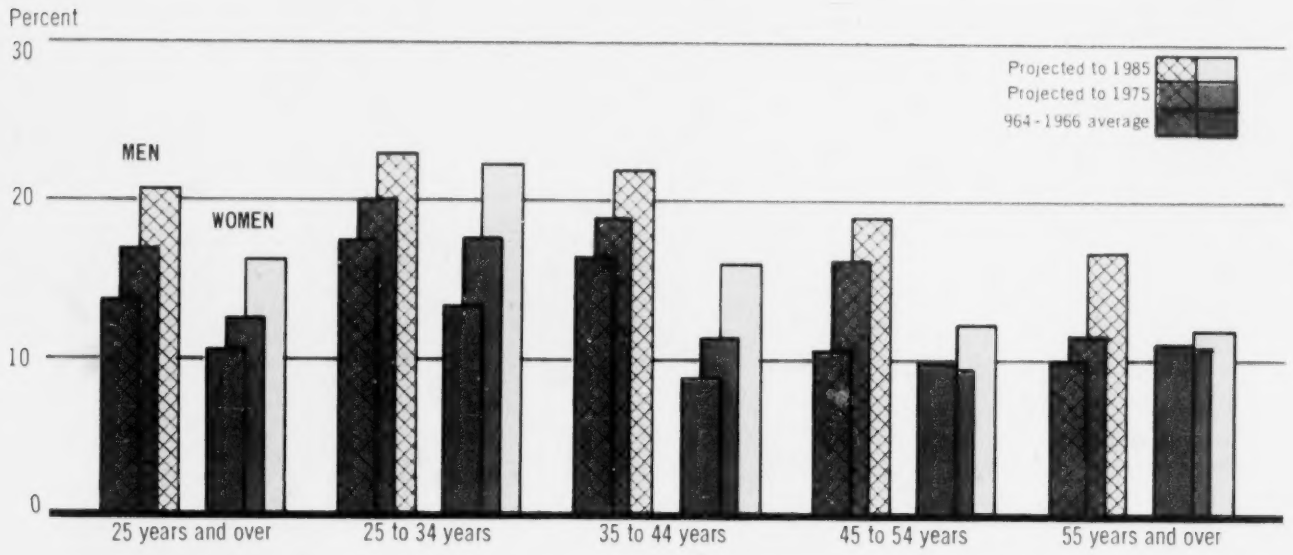
The gap in educational attainment between adult white and Negro working men will have narrowed considerably by 1985



WOMEN

A similar convergence in the educational attainment of adult white and Negro working women is also foreseen over the next 15 years

Chart 3. Percent of men and women 25 and over in civilian labor force with 4 years or more of college, by age, selected years



The proportion of adult workers with college degrees is expected to rise very rapidly, especially among the men, in the next 15 years.

perform useful work; it is also unrealistic, given the nature of many of the jobs which need to be filled.[9] The real needs of employees can best be met by a selective process which ensures an optimal matching of jobs and workers. This optimum can be missed just as easily by filling jobs with overqualified workers as by hiring underqualified workers. In fact, one of the essential ingredients of any rewarding job is precisely the challenge that accompanies the need to extend one's qualifications while actually performing the job itself.

On methodology

These projections were developed by a method that provides a systematic linkage with the educational projections, by age and sex, for the population as a whole, prepared by the Bureau of the Census.[10] In the age groups where two series of educational distributions were developed (persons 25 to 34 in 1975, 25 to 39, in 1980, and 25 to 44 in 1985) the higher of the two series was adopted.

A. All classes. The procedure for projecting the educational distribution of the adult labor force was carried out in the following sequence.

Step 1. Percentage distributions of the population and of the civilian labor force by sex, for age groups 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and over were obtained for the following educational attainment categories: less than 5 years (including no school years completed), 5 to 7 years, 8 years, 9 to 11 years, 12 years, 13 to 15 years (1 to 3 years of college), and 16 years or more. These data were obtained from the March Current Population Surveys for two periods: (1) An average of 1957 and 1959; and (2) an average of 1964, 1965, and 1966.[11]

Step 2. The differences in the observed educational distributions of the population and civilian labor force in corresponding age-sex groups were projected to 1985. These projected differences reflected observed trends, either converging or diverging; otherwise they were held constant.

Step 3. The projected differences—positive or negative—in step 2 were applied to the projected educational distributions for the population to obtain a first approximation of the projected educational attainment of the labor force for 1975, 1980, and 1985.

Step 4. The projected percent distributions by

Table 3. Projected educational attainment of the white civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985
[Percent distribution]

Age and years of school completed	1975			1980			1985		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
25 YEARS AND OVER									
Total: Number (in thousands)	62,124	40,140	21,984	67,631	43,428	24,203	73,728	47,243	26,485
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	31.5	32.8	29.0	26.8	27.8	24.7	22.4	23.0	21.1
4 years of high school or more	68.5	67.1	71.1	73.4	72.2	75.3	77.7	76.9	78.9
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	1.8	2.1	1.1	1.3	1.6	.7	1.0	1.2	.6
5 to 7 years	4.6	5.0	3.8	3.4	3.7	2.7	2.5	2.8	2.0
8 years	8.1	8.7	7.0	6.1	6.6	5.2	4.4	4.7	3.7
High school: 1 to 3 years	17.0	17.0	17.1	16.0	15.9	16.1	14.5	14.3	14.8
4 years	41.0	37.7	46.9	43.2	40.2	48.6	45.0	42.6	49.2
College: 1 to 3 years	11.6	11.7	11.5	12.4	12.4	12.3	13.0	12.9	13.2
4 years or more	15.9	17.7	12.7	17.8	19.6	14.4	19.7	21.4	16.5
Median years of school completed	12.5	12.5	12.4	12.5	12.6	12.5	12.6	12.6	12.6
25 TO 34 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	18,663	12,696	5,967	22,153	14,955	7,198	24,390	16,371	8,019
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	19.6	20.3	18.3	16.5	16.9	15.7	13.8	14.0	13.6
4 years of high school or more	80.3	79.7	81.6	83.5	83.1	84.3	86.1	86.1	86.4
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	.7	.9	.4	.6	.7	.3	.4	.5	.3
5 to 7 years	1.8	2.0	1.3	1.2	1.3	.8	.8	.9	.6
8 years	3.0	3.3	2.4	2.1	2.4	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.2
High school: 1 to 3 years	14.1	14.1	14.2	12.6	12.5	12.9	11.1	11.0	11.5
4 years	46.3	44.8	49.6	47.3	46.4	49.1	47.9	47.9	48.1
College: 1 to 3 years	13.9	13.9	13.8	14.4	14.3	14.8	14.8	14.4	15.5
4 years or more	20.1	21.0	18.2	21.8	22.4	20.4	23.4	23.8	22.8
Median years of school completed	12.7	12.7	12.6	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.8	12.8	12.8
35 TO 44 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	14,164	9,151	5,013	16,256	10,414	5,842	20,292	12,966	7,326
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	27.9	28.4	27.1	23.7	24.3	22.5	19.8	19.8	19.4
4 years of high school or more	72.1	71.6	72.9	76.4	75.6	77.5	80.3	80.1	80.6
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	1.6	2.0	1.1	1.3	1.5	.8	.9	1.0	.5
5 to 7 years	3.9	4.3	3.0	2.7	3.1	2.0	1.8	2.0	1.4
8 years	5.6	6.1	4.8	4.2	4.5	3.6	3.0	3.2	2.6
High school: 1 to 3 years	16.8	16.0	18.2	15.5	15.2	16.1	14.1	13.6	14.9
4 years	43.7	39.8	50.7	45.5	42.1	51.5	46.7	44.3	51.0
College: 1 to 3 years	11.7	12.1	10.9	12.5	12.6	12.2	13.3	13.1	13.5
4 years or more	16.7	19.7	11.3	18.4	20.9	13.8	20.3	22.7	16.1
Median years of school completed	12.5	12.5	12.3	12.6	12.6	12.5	12.6	12.7	12.6
45 TO 54 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	15,365	9,567	5,798	14,491	8,997	5,494	14,214	8,816	5,398
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	35.5	38.2	31.0	32.4	34.6	28.8	26.8	28.2	24.6
4 years of high school or more	64.6	61.8	69.1	67.6	65.4	71.2	73.2	71.9	75.3
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	2.2	2.7	1.4	1.8	2.3	1.1	1.6	2.0	.9
5 to 7 years	5.2	6.0	3.7	4.5	5.3	3.2	3.5	4.0	2.6
8 years	9.2	10.4	7.3	7.6	8.7	5.8	5.4	6.1	4.3
High school: 1 to 3 years	18.9	19.1	18.6	18.5	18.3	18.7	16.3	16.1	16.8
4 years	40.0	34.6	48.9	41.0	35.6	49.8	44.7	40.3	51.8
College: 1 to 3 years	10.5	10.4	10.6	11.0	11.2	10.7	11.8	12.1	11.3
4 years or more	14.1	16.8	9.6	15.6	18.6	10.7	16.7	19.3	12.2
Median years of school completed	12.4	12.3	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.5	12.5	12.5
55 TO 64 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	11,069	6,853	4,216	11,742	7,147	4,595	11,720	7,124	4,596
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	43.9	47.2	38.5	36.8	40.0	31.9	33.4	36.5	28.6
4 years of high school or more	56.1	52.8	61.5	63.2	60.2	68.1	66.5	63.4	71.5
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	2.4	3.2	1.2	1.7	2.4	.7	1.6	2.1	.8
5 to 7 years	7.3	7.9	6.2	5.4	6.1	4.3	4.6	5.4	3.4
8 years	14.6	15.7	12.8	10.7	11.7	9.1	8.5	9.6	6.8
High school: 1 to 3 years	19.6	20.4	18.3	19.0	19.8	17.8	18.7	19.4	17.6
4 years	35.0	31.3	41.0	39.5	34.6	47.1	39.8	34.2	48.6
College: 1 to 3 years	9.8	9.9	9.7	10.5	10.7	10.3	11.0	11.1	10.9
4 years or more	11.3	11.6	10.8	13.2	14.9	10.7	15.7	18.1	12.0
Median years of school completed	12.2	12.1	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4

Table 3. Projected educational attainment of the white civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985—Continued
[Percent distribution]

Age and years of school completed	1975			1980			1985		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Male	Both sexes	Male	Female
65 YEARS AND OVER									
Total: Number (in thousands)	2,863	1,873	990	2,989	1,915	1,074	3,112	1,966	1,146
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	56.7	60.3	49.8	50.5	54.3	43.9	44.5	48.4	37.7
4 years of high school or more	43.3	39.7	50.2	49.4	45.7	56.0	55.5	51.7	62.2
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	4.6	5.2	3.4	2.4	2.9	1.7	1.4	1.9	.6
5 to 7 years	12.2	12.4	11.6	9.6	10.0	8.8	7.5	8.1	6.5
8 years	22.9	24.8	19.5	19.8	21.5	16.9	16.4	18.0	13.5
High school: 1 to 3 years	17.0	17.9	15.3	18.7	19.9	16.5	19.2	20.4	17.1
4 years	21.2	19.0	25.5	25.9	23.3	30.4	30.8	27.4	36.6
College: 1 to 3 years	9.7	8.2	12.5	10.4	9.1	12.8	11.0	10.0	12.8
4 years or more	12.4	12.5	12.2	13.1	13.3	12.8	13.7	14.3	12.8
Median years of school completed	10.8	10.3	12.0	11.9	11.4	12.2	12.2	12.1	12.3

[1] Includes persons reporting no formal education.

years of school completed were then applied to the previously projected civilian labor force totals for each age-sex group. The resultant numbers were then divided by the corresponding population numbers to obtain a labor force participation rate for the population in each age, sex, and educational attainment category for the periods 1957–59, 1964–65–66, 1975, 1980, and 1985.

Step 5. The labor force participation rates obtained in step 4 for 1975, 1980, and 1985 were then adjusted by introducing minor changes in the educational distribution of particular age-sex groups wherever necessary to maintain consistency with observed trends in there participation rates in 1957–59 and 1964–65–66.

B. Negro and other races (except white). Information from the Current Population Survey on the educational attainment of the population and civilian labor force, by color, is not available prior to March 1964. Furthermore, the projections of educational attainment of the population prepared by the Bureau of the Census are not available for whites and for Negro and other races separately. It was therefore decided to prepare a set of projections of the educational attainment for the "Negro and other" group, by age and sex, to 1985 as a preliminary step in developing a similar projection for the Negro civilian labor force. This was the procedure:

Step 1. The percent distribution of the educational attainment of "All Classes" (whites combined with Negro and other races) and of the "Negro and other" group, for both the population and the civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, was recorded for the following two periods: (1) An average of March 1964, 1965, and 1966, and (2) an average of March 1967, 1968, and 1969. [12]

Step 2. Observed trends in the differences in the educational distributions of the two population groups were projected to 1985 and applied to the Census Bureau projection of educational attainment of the total population, by age and sex, to obtain a corresponding distribution for the Negro population.

Step 3. Using the projected educational distribution of the Negro population as a guide, a corresponding projection for the civilian labor force was developed as described above for the "All classes" group, steps 2 to 5.

Step 4. Corresponding distributions for the white civilian labor force were obtained by subtracting the number of Negroes in the civilian labor force, by age, sex, and educational attainment category, from the corresponding numbers in "All classes," for 1975, 1980, and 1985.

The projections for Negroes are based upon a very brief time series of actual data (1964 to 1969). Furthermore, these observations are subject to considerable sampling variability because of the small frequencies encountered in many of the cells. For these reasons, among others, the educational attainment projections for the "Negro and other" group are inherently less reliable than those for the labor force as a whole. Some evidence of this instability has been obtained by making intracohort comparisons of the reported educational

Table 4. Projected educational attainment of the Negro and other races civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985

[Percent distribution]

Age and years of school completed	1975			1980			1985		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
25 YEARS AND OVER									
Total: Number (in thousands)	7,679	4,573	3,106	8,696	5,237	3,459	9,916	6,039	3,877
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	51.7	53.1	49.6	44.0	44.6	42.9	36.3	36.6	35.6
4 years of high school or more	48.3	46.8	50.4	56.1	55.4	57.1	63.8	63.4	64.4
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	7.2	9.3	4.1	5.4	6.8	3.3	3.4	4.4	1.8
5 to 7 years	11.5	11.7	11.3	8.7	8.9	8.4	5.8	5.9	5.5
8 years	8.8	8.6	9.0	6.7	6.5	6.9	5.1	4.9	5.4
High school: 1 to 3 years	24.2	23.5	25.2	23.2	22.4	24.3	22.0	21.4	22.9
4 years	31.2	29.8	33.2	36.3	35.9	37.0	40.5	40.3	40.8
College: 1 to 3 years	8.1	8.0	8.2	9.3	9.1	9.5	10.5	10.3	10.7
4 years or more	9.0	9.0	9.0	10.5	10.4	10.6	12.8	12.8	12.9
Median years of school completed	11.8	11.6	12.0	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.3	12.3	12.4
25 TO 34 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	2,638	1,643	995	3,321	2,099	1,222	3,874	2,469	1,405
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	32.5	33.5	30.5	26.4	26.9	25.3	21.4	21.8	20.7
4 years of high school or more	67.7	66.5	69.5	73.6	73.0	74.6	78.5	78.2	79.3
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	2.2	2.9	.9	1.6	2.0	.7	1.1	1.4	.5
5 to 7 years	3.7	4.0	3.1	2.3	2.4	2.1	1.4	1.5	1.3
8 years	3.8	3.8	3.7	2.6	2.6	2.5	1.7	1.7	1.8
High school: 1 to 3 years	22.8	22.8	22.8	19.9	19.9	20.0	17.2	17.2	17.1
4 years	45.0	44.5	45.5	47.4	47.6	46.9	49.0	49.6	48.0
College: 1 to 3 years	11.1	10.8	11.6	12.3	11.9	13.0	13.2	12.8	14.0
4 years or more	11.6	11.1	12.4	13.9	13.5	14.7	16.3	15.7	17.3
Median years of school completed	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.6	12.6	12.6
35 TO 44 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	1,880	1,095	785	2,130	1,268	862	2,717	1,650	1,067
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	50.2	52.0	47.8	40.9	41.6	40.1	32.2	32.6	31.3
4 years of high school or more	49.8	48.0	52.4	59.1	58.4	60.0	67.9	67.4	68.6
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	4.4	6.0	2.2	2.5	3.4	1.3	2.1	2.8	.9
5 to 7 years	9.3	10.7	7.3	6.2	7.0	5.1	3.6	3.8	3.2
8 years	8.6	8.2	9.2	5.6	5.5	5.7	3.7	3.6	3.9
High school: 1 to 3 years	27.9	27.1	29.1	26.6	25.7	28.0	22.8	22.4	23.3
4 years	31.7	30.0	34.1	39.0	38.5	39.7	44.6	44.6	44.6
College: 1 to 3 years	8.0	7.6	8.7	9.1	8.7	9.6	10.5	10.2	10.9
4 years or more	10.1	10.4	9.6	11.0	11.2	10.7	12.8	12.6	13.1
Median years of school completed	12.0	11.8	12.1	12.2	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.4	12.4
45 TO 54 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	1,780	1,012	768	1,761	998	763	1,773	1,018	755
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	63.0	65.8	59.6	59.1	62.5	54.8	50.2	52.0	47.7
4 years of high school or more	36.9	34.2	40.5	40.8	37.4	45.2	49.8	48.0	52.4
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	9.0	12.3	4.7	7.6	10.4	3.9	4.3	5.9	2.3
5 to 7 years	16.7	17.1	16.2	13.8	15.1	12.2	8.9	10.1	7.2
8 years	11.1	11.9	10.2	10.4	11.0	9.7	8.5	8.2	8.9
High school: 1 to 3 years	26.2	24.5	28.5	27.3	26.0	29.0	28.5	27.8	29.3
4 years	23.5	19.9	28.3	26.5	23.6	30.3	31.7	29.6	34.6
College: 1 to 3 years	6.6	7.1	5.9	7.0	6.8	7.2	7.7	7.5	8.1
4 years or more	6.8	7.2	6.3	7.3	7.0	7.7	10.4	10.9	9.7
Median years of school completed	10.5	10.1	11.0	11.0	10.6	11.5	12.0	11.8	12.1
55 TO 64 YEARS									
Total: Number (in thousands)	1,115	654	461	1,205	697	508	1,261	723	538
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	74.2	76.7	70.9	66.4	67.8	64.7	61.9	64.3	58.7
4 years of high school or more	25.8	23.4	29.1	33.6	32.2	35.3	38.2	35.8	41.2
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	15.4	19.6	9.5	13.1	16.1	9.1	8.6	11.5	4.8
5 to 7 years	22.6	21.3	24.5	19.0	18.8	19.3	15.3	16.0	14.3
8 years	15.7	15.0	16.7	12.7	12.1	13.6	11.3	11.5	11.0
High school: 1 to 3 years	20.5	20.8	20.2	21.6	20.8	22.7	26.7	25.3	28.6
4 years	15.2	13.0	18.2	21.6	20.2	23.5	24.1	20.9	28.4
College: 1 to 3 years	4.8	4.9	4.6	6.0	6.3	5.5	7.0	7.6	6.1
4 years or more	5.8	5.5	6.3	6.0	5.7	6.3	7.1	7.3	6.7

Table 4. Projected educational attainment of the Negro and other races civilian labor force 25 years old and over, by age and sex, 1975, 1980, and 1985—Continued

Age and years of school completed	1975			1980			1985		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
Median years of school completed	8.8	8.6	8.9	9.7	9.4	10.1	10.7	10.3	11.1
65 YEARS AND OVER									
Total: Number (in thousands)	266	169	97	279	175	104	291	179	112
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 4 years of high school [1]	83.5	84.6	81.3	80.9	82.3	78.8	74.1	75.9	71.0
4 years of high school or more	16.6	15.4	18.8	19.0	17.7	21.1	26.0	24.0	28.9
Elementary: Less than 5 years [1]	30.2	34.9	21.9	25.4	30.9	16.7	16.3	21.2	9.6
5 to 7 years	24.2	23.1	26.0	26.5	24.6	29.8	23.2	21.2	26.3
8 years	15.5	14.8	16.7	13.6	13.1	14.4	15.4	15.6	14.9
High school: 1 to 3 years	13.6	11.8	16.7	15.4	13.7	18.3	18.8	17.9	20.2
4 years	9.1	8.3	10.4	9.3	8.0	11.5	13.3	11.2	16.7
College: 1 to 3 years	3.0	2.4	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.8	5.5	5.0	6.1
4 years or more	4.5	4.7	4.2	5.4	5.7	4.8	7.2	7.8	6.1
Median years of school completed	7.4	6.9	8.1	7.8	7.4	8.3	8.6	8.5	8.9

[1] Includes persons reporting no formal education.

attainment of two cohort groups in the population, by color and sex, as obtained in the Current Population Surveys of March 1964 and March 1969. The first cohort group comprises persons age 20 to 24 in March 1964—a group whose educational attainment would be expected to increase somewhat during the following 5-year period to March 1969, when it would be age 25 to 29 years. During this 5-year period, white men reported an overall educational upgrading of 13.2 percentage points, while Negro men reported an upgrading of 10.4 percentage points. Nearly all of the improvement among the whites stemmed from a reduction in the proportion reporting 1 to 3 years of college and a corresponding rise in the proportion reporting completion of 4 years or or more of college. Among Negro men the upgrading was about evenly divided between those who reported completion of 4 years of high school and those who reported completion of 4 years or more of college. Corresponding upgrading among white and Negro women was distributed similarly and amounted to 6.7 and 7.3 percentage points, respectively. The magnitude and direction of changes reported among both color groups for this cohort are generally in line with expectations.

For the cohort age 25 to 29 in 1964, a different picture emerges. As this group ages over the 5-year period to 1969, we would expect relatively minor changes in its reported educational attainment. Since most adults in this age group who are still engaged in regular schooling would be college graduates pursuing advanced degrees, their attainment of these degrees would not alter their original classification in the "4 years or more of college" group. This expected stability was found among white men and women, who reported a net change of only 2.8 and 2.1 percentage points, respectively, during this 5-year period. Among the "Negro and other" group, however, the reported net change amounted to 9.2 and 10.9 percentage points, respectively. In each case, the largest reported increase was in the percentage with 9 to 11 years of school completed. Taken at face value, these findings suggest that Negroes may be taking far more advantage than whites of available opportunities for adult education. However, the finding that this upgrading is greater among the 25 to 34 group than among the 20 to 29 group suggests some reported upgrading may be spurious.[13] □

——FOOTNOTES——

[1] In this report, data for the grouping, "Negro and other races," are used to represent data for Negroes, since Negroes constitute about 92 percent of all persons in the grouping. In addition to Negroes, the grouping includes American Indians, Filipinos, Chinese, and Japanese, among others.

[2] The stability of the median educational attainment of any group, once it reaches 12 years, reflects the fact that this attainment level is the terminal point for the formal education of many persons.

[3] For information on the continuing erosion of the labor

force activity of less-educated older males, see Denis F. Johnston, "Education and the Labor Force," and Charles C. Killingsworth, "The Continuing Labor Market Twist," *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1968, pp. 1–11 and 12–17 respectively.

[4] John K. Folger and Charles B. Nam, *Education of the American Population* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 135.

[5] J. Eugene Welden, "30 Million Adults Go to School," in *American Education*, November 1969 (vol. 5, no. 9), pp. 11–13.

[6] John C. Flanagan and others, *Studies of the American High School*, Project Talent Monograph Series (Pittsburgh, Pa., University of Pittsburgh, 1962). James S. Coleman and others, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966). For an excellent summary of this study, see James S. Coleman, "Equality of Educational Opportunity, Reexamined," *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences* (vol. 2, 1969), pp. 347–354.

[7] For a critical summary of recent efforts at assessing the quality of education, see Abbott L. Ferriss, *Indicators of Trends in American Education* (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1969), pp. 87–99.

[8] Considerable evidence has been accumulating to the effect that schooling in communities whose inhabitants are predominantly of low socioeconomic status tends to be decidedly inferior in quality, regardless of the racial composition of the student body. See, for example, James S. Coleman and others, op. cit., p. 296 and Alan B. Wilson, *The Consequences of Segregation; Academic Achievement in a Northern Community* (Berkeley, Calif., The Glendessary Press, March 1969).

[9] See *Credentials and Common Sense; Jobs for People Without Diplomas*, Manpower Report No. 13 (Washington, Manpower Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, December 1968.)

[10] *Projections of Educational Attainment, 1970 to 1985, March 1968, Current Population Reports*, Series P–25, No. 390 (U.S. Bureau of the Census).

[11] Current Population Survey data on the educational attainment of the population are presented in *Current Population Reports*, Series P–20, No. 77 (for March 1957); No. 99 (for March 1959); No. 138 (for March 1964); and No. 158 (for March 1965 and 1966) (U.S. Bureau of the Census). The civilian labor force data are presented in *Current Population Reports*, Series P–50, No. 78 (for March 1957) and Special Labor Force Report No. 1 (for March 1959); No. 53 (for March 1964); No. 65 (for March 1965); and No. 83 (for March 1966), (Bureau of Labor Statistics). These reports were reprinted, with additional tables, from the *Monthly Labor Review*, February 1960, May 1965, March 1966, and June 1967, respectively.

[12] Current Population Survey data on the educational attainment of the population by race are presented in the reports cited in the preceding footnote and in *Current Population Reports*, Series P–20, Nos. 169, 182, and 194 for 1967, 1968, and 1969, respectively. Data for the civilian labor force may be obtained in Special Labor Force Report No. 92 and 103 (for 1967 and 1968, respectively), reprinted from the *Monthly Labor Review*, February 1968 and February 1969 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Data for March 1969 are from unpublished tabulations for a report in preparation.

[13] This differential upgrading has also been observed by Reynolds Farley, "The Quality of Demographic Data for Nonwhites," *Demography* (vol. 5, No. 1, 1968), pp. 1–10. Dr. Farley notes that as a cohort ages, the years of school completed reported for that cohort increases more rapidly for nonwhites than for whites. He suggests that this increase may be attributed to both overreporting of educational attainment and to selective mortality in the "Negro and other" group.

Differences in salary and type of college

As far as salaries are concerned, there is a surprisingly low correspondence between type of college and earnings 5 years later. Age at that stage in life seems to play a much greater role in predicting salary than does one's alma mater. . . . On the whole, differences in salary appear to depend more on the occupation itself than on the institution which prepared the graduate for the occupation. In the long run, the salary differentials between graduates in the same field but from different institutions may widen as more professional and graduate degree holders fill the labor force. But from the vantage point of 5 years after college, it appears that the expansion in higher education and the unprecedented demand for college graduates has greatly narrowed the earnings gap between those who went to the most prestigious schools and those who got their education in less exclusive surroundings.

—Laure M. Sharp,

Education and Employment: The Early Careers of College Graduates

(Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 110–111.

Following is a list of reprints of Special Labor Force Reports which have been published in the *Monthly Labor Review* since September 1966. Copies may be obtained while the supply lasts upon request to the Bureau of Labor Statistics or to any of its regional offices.

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